

Indianapolis Charter Schools

Second Year Review

Detailed Information

This document builds on the Conceptual Map and provides more detailed information for the charter school and the site team in terms of activities and expectations surrounding the actual visit in the fall of the academic year. Please use this document as a “worksheet” to be sure that everything is in place for the site visit.

Scheduling

There are several activities which the site team needs to accomplish during the day of the visit. There is some flexibility for when these activities are scheduled, allowing the school space to align the activities to their local schedule. Schools can move blocks within each of the columns to fit with individual schedules of the personnel involved. Typically, three site team members will be present throughout the day (7am-5:30pm).

Time	Site Team Member 1	Site Team Member 2	Site Team Member 3
7:00 am – 7:15am	Site team meeting	Site team meeting	Site team meeting
7:15 am – 7:45 am	Parent focus group	Teacher focus group	Student focus group
8:00 am – 8:30 am	Parent focus group	Teacher focus group	Student focus group
8:45 am – 9:30 am	School Leader interview	Classroom observations	Classroom observations
9:45 am – 10:30 am	CEO interview	Classroom observations	Classroom observations
10:45 am – 11:30 am	Dean of Students interview	Classroom observations	Classroom observations
11:30 am – 12:30 am	Team meeting/lunch	Team meeting/lunch	Team meeting/lunch
12:45 am – 1:30 am	Curriculum/Instructional Leader interview	Classroom observations	Classroom observations
1:45 am – 2:30 pm	Business/Financial Interview	Classroom observations	Classroom observations
2:45 pm – 3:30 pm	Board member interview	Teacher focus group	Student focus group
3:45 pm – 4:30 pm	Team meeting time	Team meeting time	Team meeting time
4:30 pm – 5:30 pm	Feedback to School	Feedback to school	Feedback to school
5:30 pm – 6:30 pm	Parent focus group (as needed)	Teacher focus group (as needed)	Student focus group (as needed)

Ideally, the shaded rows will remain intact, giving the site team the necessary time to discuss the evidence they have been collecting throughout the day. Every effort will be made to make the most use of the site team’s time in the building on the day of the visit. Basically, we need to observe as many grade levels or content areas as possible, interview as many of the school leaders as possible, teachers from across the curriculum and who represent differing experience levels, students of varied ability and from across different grade levels, and parents who are available.

Site Visit Preparations

Each of the following groups will do its best to meet the following expectations prior to the site visit.

Charter School

- ☐ • Identify a contact person to facilitate the site visit questions or issues
- ☐ • Set up a work space for the team
- ☐ • Designate space(s) for focus group interviews
 - ☐ ○ Have each student bring one sample of work to the student focus groups
 - ☐ ○ Identify participants for parent, student, and instructional staff focus groups
- ☐ • Map of the school with teachers, grades and classroom locations identified
- ☐ • Copies of written policies and/or handbooks for teachers, parents, and/or students

Mayor's Office

- ☐ • Schedule pre-visit and visit with schools and provide packets of information as needed
- ☐ • Copy of school's master schedule (most current)
- ☐ • Organizational chart and/or list of staff (names, grades, subjects, e-mail address)
- ☐ • Copy of site visit reports from previous year
- ☐ • Background information on school – mission, enrollment targets, description of philosophy and curriculum (charter)
- ☐ • Provide update of issues related to compliance requirements to team
 - ☐ ○ monthly reports, accountability plan
- ☐ • Summary of background information on students – number of students and demographics (grades, race/ethnicity, gender, ESE, ESL, other special needs students)

Site Team Members

- ☐ • Review site visit report from the previous year(s)
- ☐ • Review background information on schools
- ☐ • Review documentation and evidence related to the performance framework
 - ☐ ○ Performance Review Follow-up
 - ☐ ○ Other data as available prior to the visit

Helpful Documentation/Evidence (provided by the Mayor's Office or Charter School)

- ☐ • Curriculum map, link to state standards (if possible)
- ☐ • Instruments, data, analysis of data tracking student achievement (ISTEP, NWEA, AYP, etc)
- ☐ • Examples of publications or information for parents and the general public
- ☐ • Copy of school-specific and academic goals for the school
- ☐ • Board meeting minutes
- ☐ • Evidence of student academic gains in previous year
- ☐ • Comparison of academic performance to schools that students would have attended
- ☐ • Most recent results of Indiana State Board of Accounts audit
- ☐ • Parent/staff survey data from previous year
- ☐ • Synthesis of classroom observations conducted by school administration
- ☐ • Available for classroom observations: lesson plan and related materials for review

The "helpful documentation" is indeed helpful to site team members when conducting focus group interviews and classroom observations as it provides much needed context. However, this list is not exhaustive in that other evidence sources could be used, nor is it required in a strict sense.

Best Practice Information

The following information is intended to help the school prepare for the site visit. The content represents the best practices that have been discovered in previous years. Please contact the site team coordinator (Tyler Sparks – tysparks@indiana.edu) if you have additional questions.

Space Requirements:

1. The site team should have access to a team meeting space that is not used by staff. The team meeting space can be small but it must be private.
2. The best arrangement, when possible, for space is to have a space designated for each team member that can be used throughout the day (three spaces). It is easier to give teachers a specific room location for focus groups vs. having team members move from room to room. Another workable arrangement is to have a large common area for all team activities, and to have chairs (and if possible a table) set up in three separate areas of the room. If the space is sufficiently large, we can conduct multiple activities at the same time in the one room. The minimum requirements are to have a private team space (can be small) and to have the appropriate number of spaces designated for focus groups. If two focus groups are running concurrently, then there must two spaces available for those activities.
3. All administrative interviews can be conducted in the office or space for the specific administrator (e.g., Title I, Special education, school leaders).

Scheduling Issues & Tips:

Parent Focus Groups:

1. There are three optional times for the parent focus group and the school can select those that best suit their needs (see tentative schedule above).
2. The school should work proactively to recruit parent participation in focus groups prior to the day of the site visit. All parents should be encouraged to attend, but we need to have a minimum of 10 parents. Parents need not to be invited selectively or hand-picked, rather all parents need to be aware of and encouraged to attend.

Teacher Focus Groups

1. As many teachers as possible must be interviewed and they must know the location and start time. They must be on time.
2. We have scheduled 45 minute blocks of time for teacher focus groups. 2-5 teachers can be in each of the focus groups.
3. It is better to designate a consistent space for each team member to have focus groups and communicate to teachers the location, vs. having team members move to different rooms for focus groups.
4. It would be very helpful, if possible, to have all first-year teachers and transition to teaching staff, in one or two focus groups together, as there are issues related to mentoring and professional development for these teachers.
5. The time slots for “Teacher focus groups” and “Classroom observations” are interchangeable and can be flexed as needed.

Student Focus Groups:

1. Students need to be selected based on their grade level (grades 4 and up) and ability, as well as any other demographic that is relevant to the school. A diversity of input and perspective from the students is the goal. There need to be 3-5 students in each group.
2. Each student needs to bring a piece of work (or work binder) that is selected by the student---not selected by the teacher. We want to see a range of student performance.
3. We can interview students in one large space (cafeteria, library, media room).

Administrative Track Interviews:

1. We do not need to interview non-academic administrative staff, bookkeepers, etc. unless they perform functions related to student behavior, school finance, or one of the other performance framework standards.
2. We need to interview school leaders, coordinators for Title I, ESL, and special education, curriculum coordinators/directors, coordinators for early college, and other administrators that are specific to the school HR structure.
3. If necessary, we might talk with two administrators at one time. If this is necessary, the closer their job functions are, the better, for example, a special education, ESL, or Title 1 coordinator or a Dean of students and assistant principal.

Classroom Observations

1. Can schedule with specific classrooms or just give members a block of time (45 minutes).
2. Usually team members spend 30-45 minutes per classroom.
3. Teachers should have a copy of their lesson plan and any related materials to be used during the class for the site team member to review

Board Members

1. The Board Member interview can take place via conference call.
2. Ideal is to encourage schools to bring 1-2 Board members to end-of-day feedback session (via phone works as well).
3. Site Team members are also available to deliver/present the final report to a Board meeting and answer their questions.

The site team will share interview, focus group, and classroom observation protocols with the school at least one week prior to the site visit.

After the site visit, the team will prepare a report to share with the school and its constituents, providing the opportunity for input on the document. Once that input has been secured, the site team will finalize the report for the Mayor's Office. In the report, the site team will try to address the standards and indicators listed in the accountability handbook. If the team cannot make a judgment on an indicator during the fall visit, it will make every effort to follow-up and report on the indicator during the spring visit.

Accountability Handbook

http://indygov.org/eGov/Mayor/Education/Charter/Schools/Operating/Pages/accountability_handbook.aspx